



Vol. 1, Issue No. 1 – May 2023

Milwaukee County Office of Equity Launches Newsletter

The **Milwaukee County Equity Compass** is a **monthly** newsletter published by the Milwaukee County Office of Equity (OOE). Our aim is to feature information about our countywide initiatives and community outreach efforts. Plus, learn about our strategic partnerships, with an emphasis on communities of color and vulnerable populations, across Milwaukee County. OOE's work falls in line with Milwaukee County's vision: By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin. Racial equity will be achieved when race no longer predicts health outcomes and outcomes for everyone are improved.

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A Word from David Crowley, Milwaukee County Executive

Hello friends!

It's an honor to address all of you in this, the inaugural edition of The Equity Compass!

I, along with all of Milwaukee County, stand with the Office of Equity and its focus on ensuring **just and fair inclusion of people of color, where all people can participate, prosper and reach their full human potential.**

In Milwaukee County, we've stated that our organizational goal is to realize a vision of the county where your race or zip code doesn't determine your health outcomes or life expectancy. We have a vision that by achieving racial equity, we will become the healthiest county in the state of Wisconsin.

In 2019, Milwaukee County took one of the most innovative approaches the nation has seen to address health inequities by becoming the first jurisdiction in the nation to declare racism a public health crisis.

Declaring racism a public health crisis means we acknowledge that explicitly and implicitly racist policies and practices at all levels of government have worked to the advantage of white residents and to the disadvantage of Black residents and other residents of color.

There are significant health disparities for Milwaukee County residents along racial lines, which impacts community health overall.

Not only do I think County government has a role in tearing down systemic racism and improving health outcomes for residents of color – we believe we have an obligation to make a change and improve the lives of all our residents.

We have put forth a plan to end racist policies and practices, move resources upstream, make those resources more accessible and address the social determinants of health.

I'm proud to say that together, we are on that path.

Moving forward I'm exciting about reading and sharing here regularly.

Wishing you all well!

Sincerely,
David C. Crowley
Milwaukee County Executive



At the Advancing Health Literacy Project Kickoff event on March 27, Ciara Hartzog of the Milwaukee County Office of Equity and Jeremy Goodrum of the City of Milwaukee Office of African American Affairs give an overview of the program to the audience.

Advancing Health Literacy Project Aims to Create Tools to Remove Barriers

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Milwaukee County's Black community was among the hardest hit. Much of the high infection rate and the number of deaths were tied to historical and present-day health and racial disparities.

Thanks to a grant from the Office of Minority Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, a local partnership is working together to create a community health tool kit and determine which messages and resources resonate most with ethnic minority groups, especially those most impacted by COVID-19.

The **Advancing Health Literacy (AHL) Project** is led by the City of Milwaukee Office of African American Affairs(OAAA). The Milwaukee County Office of Equity (OoE), along with Marquette University, Ubuntu Research & Evaluation and Unite WI are project partners. The project's goal is to reduce health disparities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic by improving health literacy within Milwaukee's racial and ethnic minority communities.

On Monday, March 27, area residents were invited to attend AHL's kickoff event at the Center Street Public Library, located at 2727 W. Fond du Lac Avenue. At the kickoff, attendees learned how they can take part in this community-based research project.

Through listening sessions, residents will give their input on community health toolkits, healthcare messages, and which resources work best for delivering them to racial and ethnic minority groups. This work aligns with Milwaukee County's vision of becoming the healthiest county in the state.

For more information about the Advancing Health Literacy Project, contact Ciara Hartzog, Research & Advocacy Manager for the Milwaukee County Office Equity at ciara.hartzog@milwaukeecountywi.gov, or Jeremy Goodrum, Program Manager with the City of Milwaukee Office of African American Affairs at jegoodrum@milwaukee.gov. (See more details about the listening sessions in the "To Do and To See" section of the Milwaukee County Equity Compass.)



Representatives from the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department and the Milwaukee County Department of Health & Human Services were on hand at a recent Drug Take Back Day event at the Washington Park Senior Center. Both departments are members of the We Care Crew, which also includes several nonprofit community organizations.

We Care Crew Continues to Live Up to its Name

As Milwaukee County and the rest of the nation emerge out of the pandemic, the We Care Crew Collaborative remains active as ever by supporting its members.

The We Care Crew consists of several organizations representing Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee as well as several nonprofit groups.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, they came together to provide care and assistance for areas hardest hit these past three years. They offered masks, meals, safe programming with physically distanced activities, public health education, participated in the Certified Credible Messengers program, and served as supportive community ambassadors.

Today, the We Care Crew continues to support its members and collaborate on community wide events that address ongoing needs such as safety for all ages. Two such examples are the Drug Take Back Day Safe & Sound's Safe Summer Kickoff.

Drug Take Back Day Event

For instance, on April 21, Deputy Kristine Rodriguez, a member of the We Care Crew, led the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office Annual Drug Take Back Day event. In partnership with the Milwaukee We Care Crew Collaborative, the event encouraged Milwaukee residents to dispose of unused, expired, or unneeded medications. This year's event was held at the Washington Senior Center and collected nearly 191 pounds of medications, filling up 14 boxes. In an interview with [Channel 58 CBS News](#) Deputy Rodriguez said, "Prevention and awareness are a really big part of this we want people to be aware that they themselves have the power to get rid of any danger in their homes."

Safe & Sound: Safe Summer Kickoff

Another member of the We Care Crew is Safe & Sound, Inc. and it is inviting the community to celebrate its 25th anniversary with a **Safe Summer Kickoff on May 13, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 4422 W. Leon Terrace.**

The nonprofit invites all block party guests to take a pledge to have a safe summer of fun. The event not only celebrates the season it is an opportunity to learn about a host of summer programs that are available to children and teens across Milwaukee such as youth camps, summer jobs, and other safe activities. Plus, the Safe Summer Kickoff will have free food, games, and music. We Care Crew members will also be on-site with information to share. (There are more details about this event in the "To Do and To See" section of the Milwaukee County Equity Compass.)

To learn more about the We Care Crew and how you can become involved, contact Zari Miller at zari.miller@milwaukeecountywi.gov.



Milwaukee County Office of Equity's Strategic Communication Manager Jacqueline Zeledon (top right) and Research & Advocacy Manager Ciara Hartzog (bottom right) interview Melissa Ugland (center image), Principal at Ugland Associates for a case study and video about Milwaukee County's Community Resilience Imperative (CRI). The CRI is a collective impact group comprised of Milwaukee County residents and community members, grassroots groups to address COVID-19 care among most vulnerable populations.

Increased Visibility for Milwaukee County Collective Impact Imperative: Milwaukee County's Community Resilience Imperative (CRI)

When COVID-19 hit Milwaukee County, the gaps created by pre-existing racial and social barriers threatened to severely impact Black and Brown residents in terms of getting access to much-needed testing, treatment and related health and health care.

The Milwaukee Community Resilience Imperative (CRI) is a multifaceted collective established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This unique collective impact imperative brought together grassroots groups and systems partners to form an ecosystem that would fulfill its mission: eliminating racial and social inequities through social cohesion in the face of oppression to drive system change by elevating protective factors across all social determinants of health.

The CRI works toward its vision of Milwaukee County communities having the ability to respond and heal in the state of a crisis and thrive using strategies such as understanding

the current landscape to increase relevant coordination and innovate programs and services to meet community needs.

Last fall, Milwaukee County Office of Equity's (OoE) FUSE Fellow Kristin Vogel and Research and Advocacy Manager, Ciara Hartzog launched a case study on the CRI's work in efforts to increase the visibility of the group's work and share the demonstrated value and deep impact of authentic community engagement and power-sharing in communities. Along with increased visibility to the CRI's impactful work and service to Milwaukee communities, the case study will also offer valuable insights to those interested in expanding existing partnerships to eliminate working in siloes, in different ways to approach community engagement, including strategies for community empowerment.

In addition to the above, the case study will highlight input from several members of the CRI Steering Committee, such as:

- TJ Cobb, enterprise quality director for Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services.
- Dr. Quinton Cotton, co-founder of MKE Black Grassroots Network for Health Equity.
- Ian Bautista, senior director of civic engagement for the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.
- Ericka Sinclair, CEO and founder of Health Connections Inc.
- and Jeff Roman, the former executive director for Milwaukee County OoE.

The case study will also highlight the involvement of partners working in spheres such as, government, public health, education, healthcare, and business. The case study is expected to be completed in May.



May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

recognizes Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM) to increase awareness about the vital role mental health plays in our overall health and well-being.

Milwaukee County's DHHS Behavioral Health Services Access Clinics support uninsured or underinsured Milwaukee County residents over the age of 18 who are facing a mental health or co-occurring crisis by connecting them to culturally competent behavioral health care, in a neighborhood location, regardless of their ability to pay. The Access Clinics currently have three locations across the county to support community members in need:

- Access Clinic East: Outreach Community Health Centers, 210 W. Capitol Dr., Milwaukee, WI 53212

- Access Clinic North: Milwaukee Health Services, Inc., 8200 W. Silver Spring Dr., Milwaukee, WI 53218
- Access Clinic South: Sixteenth Street's National Avenue Clinic, 1635 W. National Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53204



In Need of Mental Health Services? We're here for you.

Am I eligible?

To receive Access Clinic care you must be:

- 18 or older
- Milwaukee County resident
- Without a current counselor or prescriber
- Uninsured, underinsured or insured and in crisis

Services we offer:

- Mental health and substance use assessment
- Therapeutic check-ins
- Peer support services
- Medication evaluation
- Linkages to long-term behavioral health and community resources

Access East

Located within
Outreach Community Health Centers

210 W. Capitol Dr., Milwaukee, WI 53212
Phone: 414-257-7665

Access North

Located within
Milwaukee Health Services, Inc.
8200 W. Silver Spring Dr., Milwaukee, WI 53218
Phone: 414-257-5190

Access South

Located within
Sixteenth Street's National Ave Clinic
1635 W. National Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53204
Phone: 414-257-7900



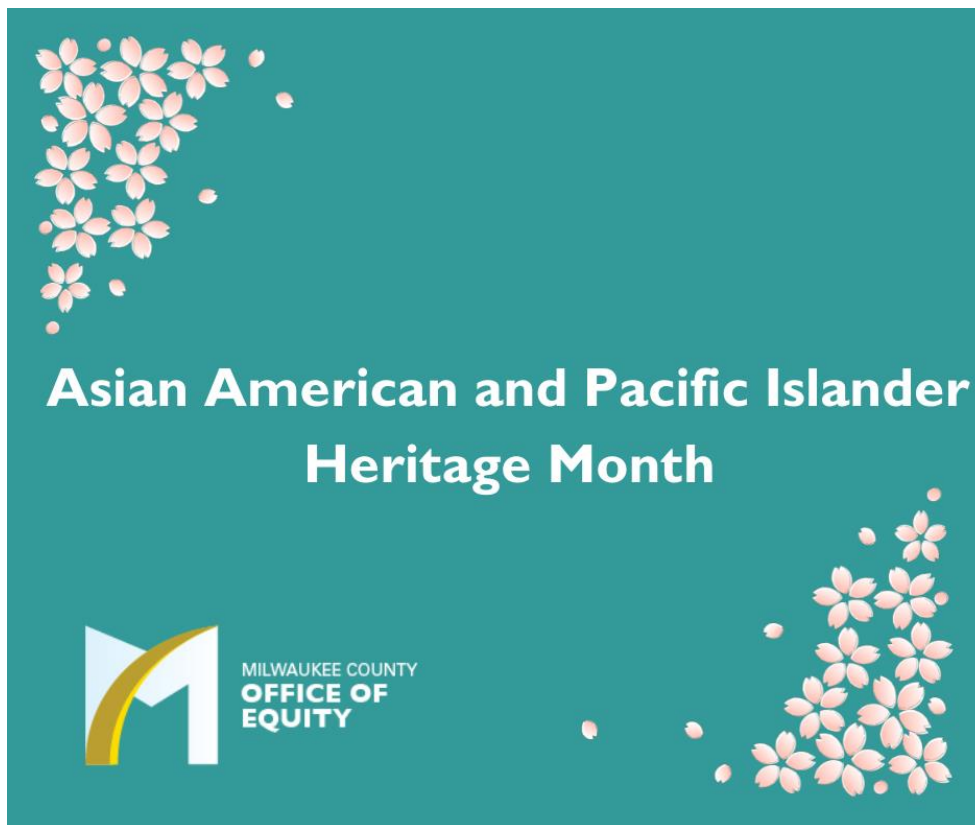
MILWAUKEE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
& HUMAN SERVICES
**BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH SERVICES**

HOURS FOR ALL CLINICS: MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:30 A.M.-4:30 P.M.
WALK-IN HOURS FOR INITIAL ASSESSMENT: 8:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.



MKE Mobile Crisis clinicians provide supportive services over the phone and in-person throughout the community to adults, youth, and families in need. Those facing a behavioral health or substance use crisis can call the Milwaukee County Crisis Line at 414-257-7222, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To Do and To See: Be Part of These Events and Celebrations in Milwaukee County



AAPI people are a diverse and growing population nationally and here in Milwaukee County. We celebrate the cultures, achievements, and leadership.

25TH ANNIVERSARY SAFE & SOUND SAFE SUMMER KICKOFF

LET'S PLEDGE FOR A SAFE SUMMER 2023!

COME LEARN ABOUT SUMMER PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES HAPPENING ACROSS THE CITY. YOUTH CAN SIGN UP FOR CAMP, SUMMER EMPLOYMENT OR ALL SORTS OF FUN IN THE SUN ACTIVITIES THAT ARE SAFE, HEALTHY AND ALL ABOUT JOY!

JOIN THE FUN:

- FREE FOOD, GAMES AND MUSIC
- A SAFE SUMMER RESOURCE FAIR
- FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
- TONS OF SWAG, SHIRTS AND TICKETS TO SUMMER EVENTS
- SIGN THE PLEDGE TO HAVE A SAFE 2023 SUMMER IN MILWAUKEE

DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 13TH

TIME: 12PM - 4PM

LOCATION: 4422 W LEON TERRACE





BE PART OF THE **ADVANCING HEALTH LITERACY PROJECT** LISTENING SESSIONS

DATES: Monday, May 22 and Monday June 12

We're seeking input to create a community health toolkit and discover which healthcare messages and resources work best with racial and ethnic minority groups.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact:

Ciara Hartzog
ciara.hartzog@milwaukeecountywi.gov

Jeremy Goodrum
jgoodrum@milwaukee.gov



Meet the “Equity Squad”!

Over the next several issues, you will meet members of the Milwaukee County Office of Equity, their roles and how they contribute to the vision for Milwaukee County.

Ciara Hartzog, Research & Advocacy Manager

Describe your job in one sentence.

In my role, I conduct and support community-based research projects and facilitate advocacy work in efforts to advise policymakers and the public on Milwaukee County programmatic and policy change to benefit County residents and communities most impacted by health and racial disparities.

In two sentences, how do you hope to make an impact through your work?

I hope to make an impact by elevating community voices to inform policy changes that will improve residents' quality of life and equitable access to resources. In doing this, I also hope to strengthen and connect residents and communities through empowerment.

Contact me for ... policy analysis and review, survey design, research support, and advocacy plans.

When I'm away from work you can find me ... trying new recipes in the kitchen!



Zari Miller - Information and Outreach Coordinator

Describe your job in one sentence.

In my role, as the backbone support to county programs and coalitions I help facilitate conscious collaboration, to uplift Milwaukee's underserved communities.

In two sentences, how do you hope to make an impact through your work?

In supporting these programs in the capacity of the backbone facilitator, my hope is to help them expand their reach across Milwaukee County and foster more trusting relationships between residents and local government.

Contact me for ... more information related to the County's ARPA-funded support programs and ways to get involved with the We Care Crew Coalition.



When I am away from work you can find me ... snuggled under blankets with my nose deep in a new book!



The Milwaukee County Office of Equity is catalytic to Milwaukee County's vision to be the healthiest county in Wisconsin by achieving racial equity. We value and empower residents to identify and create impactful change through awareness, responsibility, and action. We work to challenge and change policies, practices, and power structures that have resulted in historic and persistent barriers to equity.

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